in the Carpathians. Von Hoetzendorff placed the scheme before Falkenhayn, who turned it down emphatically. Why? He also had his plan. He proposed to eliminate France by pounding the morale of her fine army into pulp in the mortar of Verdun. Once the fighting quality of the French Army was destroyed there would be nothing left to take its place. Britain was not ready. Her volunteer army was not yet trained. Her equipment of guns and ammunition was not complete. We all know now how disastrously Falkenhayn miscalculated the resisting power of the French soldier. We also know that had the Austrians started their Trentino offensive in March or April instead of at the end of May, which they could have done had the Germans played up, the Russians could not have delivered the famous Brussiloff stroke. Thus the additional weight which the Germans could have brought in guns, troops and quality would have converted the serious Italian defeat of 1916 into a calamitous rout. It would have been a more disastrous Caporetto. It was a more deadly stroke, for its direction was across the rear of the Italian Armies on the Isonzo. Its success must therefore have ended in a complete collapse of the whole Italian system of defence. In 1916 the Allies had made no arrangements such as those they perfected

Falkenhayn prefers Verdun

A great opportunity lost

in 1917, as the result of the Rome Conference, to hurry troops to the aid of Italy in the event of a German-Austrian attack. That oversight would have made a difference of weeks—fateful weeks—in the arrival of needful help for the hard-pressed Italians. Even when British and French troops arrived on the scene, they would not then have had such a margin of heavy